

**Consumer Federation of America
Consumer Reports
American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery
Kids In Danger
North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition
Public Citizen
U.S. PIRG**

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Contact: Rachel Weintraub, CFA, 202-939-1012

Camille Bonta, NASPGHAN, 202-320-3658

**PHYSICIANS AND CONSUMER ADVOCATES WARN CONSUMERS
AGAINST HIGH-POWERED MAGNET SETS; ASK FOR
CONGRESSIONAL INTERVENTION**

Washington, D.C. — A surge in the number of ingestions by children of rare-earth, high-powered magnets that are part of magnet sets often marketed and sold as desktop trinkets and stress relievers has led to the introduction of legislation in the U.S. Senate by Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) that would ban the sale of these products in the United States.

Physicians and consumer advocates remind the public that high-powered magnet sets do not make good holiday gifts and call on Congress to act swiftly and pass the “Magnet Injury Prevention Act.”

Kids often put in their mouth and swallow a lot of objects they should not. High-powered magnet ingestions are different than other ingested foreign objects. Most will pass through the digestive tract without incident. However, when two or more magnets are ingested, their strong magnetic force allows the magnets to “find” each other once inside the digestive tract. Consequently, there is a high risk of a fold of intestine becoming trapped between the magnets. When this occurs, the magnets erode through the bowel wall and children may develop perforations, infection, or abnormal connections (i.e. fistulae) within the bowel. Sometimes, the magnetic force causes the intestine to twist on itself, cutting off blood supply and leading to bowel necrosis, or tissue death. Ingestion of magnets requires medical management and almost always leads to endoscopic or surgical removal.

These high-powered magnet sets often consist of 200 or more individual, tiny, sphere- or cube-shaped magnets and are sold in a variety of colors. Individual magnets can get easily lost on the floor and in carpeting or furniture where they can be found by children and pets. As part of normal mouthing behavior or because the magnets look like candy, young children put them in their mouth. Older children and teens use the magnets to mimic nose, tongue and cheek piercings.

In response to injuries caused by ingestion of high-powered magnets, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) issued a safety standard for high-power magnet sets in 2014 which stipulated that if a magnet set contains a magnet that fits within the CPSC's small parts cylinder, each magnet in the magnet set must have a flux index of 50 kG² mm² or less. In 2016, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit vacated the 2014 CPSC rule on the basis of incomplete and inadequately explained findings and remanded the issue back to the agency for further action.

The CPSC established a safety standard for high-powered magnet sets because these products were and continue to be a hazard. An examination of data from the National Poison Control Center shows a dramatic increase in ingestion cases in 2017-2018 after high-powered magnets came back on the market, with 1,316 reported cases to date for 2019 alone. Barring CPSC action to reinstate its previous safety standard, federal legislation is necessary to protect children from these dangerous and otherwise innocuous looking products.

“Pediatric gastroenterologists are treating, with dramatically increasing frequency, children and teens who have ingested high-powered magnets from these sets. We are seeing first hand, all too commonly, the gastrointestinal trauma ingested magnets can cause, including intestinal perforation, and sadly, death,” said NASPGHAN President Karen Murray, MD. “Warning labels cannot adequately convey their risk, and therefore the only solution is to remove them from the market.”

“Small powerful magnets were deadly in toys, and so they were banned and injuries dropped dramatically,” stated Nancy Cowles, Executive Director of Kids In Danger. “They are no less dangerous to children when they are brought into homes as so-called desk toys for adults. We have seen the injury rate rise as more consumers purchase magnet sets. We support this measure to keep this well-known hazardous product out of reach of children.”

“High powered magnets pose a hidden hazard to children who swallow them. Parents are unaware of the dangerous consequences of ingesting more than one magnet,” stated Rachel Weintraub, General Counsel and Legislative Director of Consumer Federation of America. “We applaud the introduction of this legislation which will effectively protect children from this hazard.”

"Every day we wait for action is another day a panicked parent may need to rush their child to the hospital for emergency surgery because of these dangerous magnets. It's an unnecessary hazard with an easy solution thanks to Senator Blumenthal's introduction of the Safe Magnets Act of 2019," said Adam Garber, U.S. PIRG Consumer Watchdog.

"We commend Senator Blumenthal for taking action. High powered magnets are a danger to children. We should safeguard them from this danger once and for all," said Remington A. Gregg, Counsel for Civil Justice and Consumer Rights at Public Citizen.

"Historically, a number of products threatening the safety of a vulnerable population have been justifiably removed from the marketplace through collaborative legislative and regulatory action," stated American Academy of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery EVP/CEO James C. Denny III, MD. "The significant risks of ingesting certain high-powered magnets and the resulting devastating complications pose such a danger to all Americans, especially children, to warrant their immediate removal from the market. The AAO-HNS commends Senator Blumenthal's leadership to protect all Americans from this avoidable tragedy."

"These aren't like normal magnets. If people swallow them, they're at risk of serious, lifelong injuries or even death," says William Wallace, manager of home and safety policy for Consumer Reports. "Congress should pass the Magnet Injury Prevention Act, and everyone with children or teens around should avoid all small, high-powered magnet sets."

Children should receive immediate medical attention for a known or suspected magnet ingestion. Consumers and health care providers are strongly encouraged to report incidents of ingestions to www.saferproducts.gov.

[The Consumer Federation of America](http://www.consumerfederation.org) is a nonprofit association of more than 250 consumer groups that was founded in 1968 to advance the consumer interest through research, advocacy, and education.

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